The Meteorological Office

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Met. Office 'Christmas Presents' To Benefit Hurricane-Hit Central America

This week The Met. Office's Hadley Centre won an award for its work on climate change. At the same time The Met. Office was notified that its computer forecasts proved the most accurate of all those used this year by Miami's National Hurricane Centre. The prize money from the 'Discoverer of the Year' award will now be used to bring some benefits to areas that were devastated by Hurricane Mitch in late October.

The 'Discoverer of the Year' award was received at Tuesday night's Discovery Science Awards dinner in London. It was given to The Hadley Centre in recognition of its significant contribution to progress made in the understanding, detection and prediction of climate change. The awards were organised and sponsored by the Discovery Channel, The Royal Geographical Society, and the Institute of British Geographers.

The National Hurricane Centre in Miami uses information from many different weather forecasting centres. This week they have sent a message to The Met. Office concluding that the UKMET forecasting system was the best all around model this year, especially in the east Pacific.

It has been a very active year for hurricanes, culminating in Hurricane Mitch that wreaked havoc on a massive scale over Nicaragua and Honduras. The Met. Office intends to use the five thousand pounds received as part of its 'Discoverer of the Year' award to replace some of the weather reporting infrastructure that was wiped out by Mitch's high winds and torrential rain.

Speaking after picking up the 'Discoverer of the Year' award on behalf of the Hadley Centre, Dr David Carson, a Director of The Met. Office said: "As far as climate change is concerned we don't have all the answers yet, but I am confident that sustained research, and continuing development of climate models, will lead to more valuable and reliable predictions of climate change on both global and regional scales.

"My intention is to direct the money from this award to a specific and identifiable contribution to the restoration of the meteorological services in the stricken area of Central America. It will also help to ensure the longer-term measurements which are needed to underpin the research of institutes such as the Hadley Centre."

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